

NO. 31. AN ACT RELATING TO A STATEWIDE SCHOOL YEAR
CALENDAR.

(H.15)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS; INTENT

(a) The general assembly finds:

(1) School districts need to find ways to collaborate in order to maintain concurrent schedules, improve student learning, and reduce costs through sharing of resources.

(2) Students learn best when provided educational services for uninterrupted periods of instructional time.

(3) Educators can deliver instructional services more efficiently and effectively when schools are following the same vacation, holiday, and statewide assessment schedules.

(4) Common professional development days provide educators the opportunity to participate in regional and statewide programs.

(5) A uniform statewide calendar ensures better attendance at regional programs, such as technical centers.

(6) The dates on which a school year begins and ends have great impact on families and businesses, as does the scheduling of in-service days and vacation.

(7) The purpose of adopting a statewide calendar is to improve high quality learning opportunities for all Vermont students.

(b) Therefore, it is the intent of this act to direct the committee created by this act to develop a statewide calendar to be adopted by the state board of education.

Sec. 2. STATEWIDE SCHOOL CALENDAR; COMMITTEE

(a) There is created a committee (the “calendar committee”) to develop a uniform statewide school calendar for use by all public schools in Vermont that the committee will propose to the state board of education for adoption.

The members of the calendar committee shall be:

(1) The commissioner of education, or the commissioner’s designee, who shall serve as the committee’s chair and who shall ensure that the first committee meeting occurs on or before July 15, 2007.

(2) Two representatives of each of the following entities to be selected by the entities:

(A) The Vermont superintendents association.

(B) The Vermont school boards association.

(C) The Vermont principals’ association.

(D) The Vermont-national education association.

(3) Two regional technical center directors to be selected by the Vermont association of career and technical education directors.

(4) Two members of the business community to be selected by the Vermont business roundtable.

(5) Two high school students, who shall not be the students sitting on the state board of education, one of whom shall be selected by the speaker of the house of representatives and the other shall be selected by the president pro tempore of the senate.

(b) Any calendar developed by the calendar committee and presented to the state board shall be by majority vote of the committee and:

(1) Shall require at least 175 common student attendance days. A majority of students in each grade must be in attendance or participating in a school-sponsored academic activity for a minimum of five and one-half hours, including recess and excluding lunch, for a day to constitute one full student attendance day. If a majority of students in any grade is in attendance or participating for fewer than five and one-half hours, the day shall be counted as one-half of a student attendance day.

(2) Shall require the first three student days of the academic year to occur on the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in the week preceding Labor Day.

(3) Shall include at least five common teacher in-service education days. At least one of the five days will be organized by the department and conducted at regional sites throughout the state.

(4) Shall include provisions for the state board of education, after receiving recommendations from the calendar committee, to grant a waiver for the ensuing year to a group of school districts that requests, before May 1 of any year, to deviate from the statewide calendar due to unique regional circumstances that cannot otherwise be accommodated.

(5) May include a provision that there be a sole vacation period between January 2 and April 30, to occur during the week of town meeting.

(c) To develop the statewide calendar, which if accepted by the state board of education shall serve as a model for all future years, the calendar committee shall engage in a public process with students, parents, educators, the business community, and other interested parties in at least five geographic regions of the state. During the public process, the committee shall solicit comments and recommendations concerning common periods of uninterrupted student attendance days, common vacation schedules and holidays, common in-service days, and common periods for statewide assessment. In addition, on or before September 30, 2007, the director or directors of each regional technical center shall designate a time and location at which the principals within each region shall meet with the directors to develop regional recommendations regarding a statewide calendar for presentation to the calendar committee.

(d) On or before January 30, 2008, the calendar committee shall recommend to the legislature a process by which an appropriate financial penalty shall be imposed upon any district that fails to provide at least five and

one-half hours of classes daily to students in all grade levels on each of the 175 common student attendance days required in the statewide calendar. Included within the recommendation shall be an appeal process for districts that believe they have complied with all requirements of the calendar.

(e) On or before January 30, 2008, and before each January 30 thereafter, the calendar committee shall present its proposal for a uniform statewide school calendar to the state board of education. The board may vote to approve or disapprove the proposed calendar, but may not amend it. The board shall announce its decision regarding the calendar no later than March 31 each year.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect from passage and the statewide calendar shall apply to the 2009-2010 school year and after.

Approved: May 18, 2007